6. Cannanore-Valapattinam-Kannapuram

7. Kannapuram-Payyangadi

8. Cheravathur-Nileshwar

9. Nileshwar-Kanhangad

10. Kanhangad-Kottikulam

11. Kottikulam-Kasargod

Work on long lead items on the rest of the sections has also been taken up. The work on the remaining sections will be completed in the coming years subject to availability of resources.

Optical Fibre network of the Railways

*665. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Board is interacting with the DTS for help in identifying appropriate private companies for leasing out the Railways Optical Fibre Network and the right of way along Railway tracks;

(b) if so, whether this is proposed to be done through the MoU route or an open tendering process; and

(c) what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Railway Board have neither taken any help from DTS (Department of Telecom Services) nor are they interacting with DTS for identifying appropriate private companies for leasing out Railway's optical fibre network and right of way along the Railway tracks. As announced in Railway Budget 2000-2001, Railway have taken a decision to build a nation-wide broadband telecom and multimedia network by laying optical fibre cables along 62,800 route KM of Railway track by utilising their right of way. The scheme will be implemented through a professionally-managed corporation being set up. Railways are taking action for creation of the Corporation including, inter alia, selection of Consultancy Firm for developing a business plan for the corporation and its activities. Further course of action will be finalised thereafter.